

PASSING OF THE NEW THEATRE

CAREER OF THE INSTITUTION IN ITS FIRST HOME.

Statistics of the Second Season—Some of the Accomplishments of the Theatre—Its Future Under New Conditions—Mrs. Fiske's Amusing New Play.

The first of the New Theatres closed its doors last night, and the temple on Central Park West will for a year pass into the control of a commercial manager, who has already outlined briefly to the public the programme of his season. It contains much that is unknown, although in one detail it will be familiar. "The Blue Bird" has passed into the possession of the manager who is to control the fortunes of the theatre for a year, so it is probable that this popular spectacle will be seen again. After this year of regular theatrical use the building will be converted into a home for the operas that seem too large for the capacious frame of the Metropolitan Opera House. This statement will of course be denied, but there is nevertheless no other intention at present than this ultimate use for the structure. By that time the public will be ripe for the fair trial of an experiment that only failed last year because of certain inept and bungling measures in the execution of a plan that depended on cooperation and harmony if an artistic scheme ever did but was spoiled by constant disagreement and friction.

There is cause for congratulation to the New Theatre's friends in the promise that the idea is not to perish in a certain exhibition of a chilling indifference on the part of the general public. The institution has undeniably succeeded in creating a demand for its performances. Even its most faithful admirers, however, could not follow the management into all its excursions in search of plays and especially actors, but there undeniably exists a desire to see the standard of production set by the New Theatre so far as it has advanced maintained permanently in New York. The founders have given the assurance that their ideals will be carried on in the new playhouse to be built by Warren & Wetmore. The difference in the size of the theatre will inevitably be to the advantage of everything artistic that the management may achieve. Nothing that was done in the New Theatre last winter to the credit of the institution would not have been improved by performance in a smaller auditorium. This is true even of "The Blue Bird" and "The Piper." The size of the stage and the auditorium was in many cases a serious drawback to the success of the plays.

The last season of the first of the New Theatres began on October 1 with Maeterlinck's "The Blue Bird," presented by a special company that included some of the regular actors of the institution. On November 7 Maeterlinck's "The Blue Bird" was transferred to the Majestic Theatre, where it was acted in five representations. With the new act written by the author and played almost entirely by members of the New Theatre company it was restored to the repertoire of the stage that introduced it here on February 6 and had its last performance in the theatre last night. But, as we have seen, it is not improbable that this same poetic combination of allegory and symbol will hold the same stage again.

"The Merry Wives of Windsor," which was acted on November 7, was not among the most brilliant achievements of the company and was seen but seventeen times in spite of changes in the cast, made with the hope of lightening the heaviness of the representation. "The Thunderbolt," given on November 12, had fifteen performances. Both "Don" and "Sister Beatrice" were revived on November 17. The English comedy had thirteen representations, while "Sister Beatrice," the miracle play, was presented fourteen times, one representation being in honor of Ellen Terry. Olga Nethersole brought "Mary Magdalene" and her unique dramatic methods to the observation of the astonished subscribers on December 5, but both star and play were painlessly removed after sixteen performances. "Old Heidelberg" came on December 17 to remain for seventeen representations. "Vanity Fair," which showed the scenic resources of the theatre at their best in vividly recreating a picturesque period of history, was seen, together with Marie Tempest in the role of Becky Sharp, for twenty-three performances. On January 30, "Here was complete success," to be followed by "The Piper" on January 31. The play was acted thirty-five times. On February 13 "Nobody's Daughter" was played, and very admirably played, by the company with some additions from outside forces and after only eight representations on its home stage was acted in other theatres thirty-two times. On February 27 came "The Arrow Maker," which was beautiful and even instructive from the point of view of spectacle, but too sluggish in its dramatic movement to interest the public. In all there were given by the direction of the New Theatre 576 representations, of which 134 were given on other stages. The repertoire was made up of eleven plays. All but two were new to the stage. Among the dramatists represented on the list, Mrs. Marks and Mrs. Austen are American writers.

In all these performances there was the same scenic beauty and appropriateness to which the New Theatre last year accustomed its public. The acting was generally on a higher artistic level than any other metropolitan theatre, with one exception, offers its audiences. The first season of the New Theatre began on November 8, 1909, with a production of "Antony and Cleopatra," which was given seventeen times. Edward Knobloch's adaptation of a novel, called in its dramatic form "The Cottage in the Rue," followed with nine representations. Then came John Galsworthy's "Strife," acted seventeen times. On January 10, "The Nigger," with three different performances, and "The School for Scandal," with twenty-nine representations. "Don" had fifteen hearings, while "Liz, the Mother," had fortunately but one, and that was superb. "Twelfth Night" was the second Shakespearean production and lasted through twenty-one performances, with "The Witch" as its successor, seen ten times. "Sister Beatrice" was acted seven times, while the so-called Elizabethan revival of "Winter's Tale" was given seven times. The first act of "The Blue Bird" was played eight times in conjunction with different plays. René Béchou's dramatic biography, called "Beethoven," was acted in the month of April. In all ten full plays had smaller achievements than the company

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All branches of stage folk will unite on Tuesday afternoon at the Metropolitan Opera House in giving a benefit under the auspices of the Association of Theatre Managers for the Washington place fire sufferers. Through the courtesy of the Metropolitan Opera Company, which is also donating its house for the occasion, eight operatic stars have been secured to present a special number. Among them are Emmy Destinn, Johanna Gadski, Louise Homer, Marie Rappold, Bernice de Pasquell, Leo Slezak, Antonio Scotti and Dinah Gilby. Most interesting among the dramatic offerings on the long programme is the appearance of William Gillette, and Mrs. Fiske has also promised to present a special number. Another amusing offering will be George M. Cohan, who comes from Chicago to appear in the title role of his own play, "Get-Rich-Quick-Wallinford." Joseph M. Gutter will present Constance Collier, Tyrone Power and Arthur Forrest in the third act of "Thais." Blanche Bates is another among the dramatic stars who will appear. The benefit will be a most successful one, giving several numbers from "Naughty Marietta," and Christie MacDonald will appear in a special number alone and with "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Bayes and Jack Norworth have volunteered, and the entire "Pink Lady" company has arranged a specialty. There will be sixteen vaudeville acts.

Kitty Cheatham's Easter matinee occurs at the Hudson Theatre a week from tomorrow. That "there is nothing new under the sun" is a statement that will be disproved by the programme, which opens with an "Easter Praise Meeting of the Flowers," a reverent service in which every flower tells of a special reason for gratitude and rejoicing. Miss Cheatham begins the second part of the programme with a recitation of "The Selfish Giant." A group of old negro songs and stories, with which Miss Cheatham is so particularly identified, concludes this part of the programme. The "Easter Praise Meeting of the Flowers" will be followed by "The Selfish Giant," by Oliver Herford, which will be heard for the first time. A group of nursery rhymes will be heard for the first time ends the programme.

This will be the farewell week of Rudolph Schildkraut at the Irving Place Theatre. The comic opera "Fatinista" will be played on Monday and Tuesday evenings, and for the remainder of the week the bill will be "Der Rosenkranz," a comedy by Adolph Rott, which has never been seen in America. It tells the story of a very rich man who seeks social honors and attempts to arrange a marriage between his daughter and a scoundrel, the latter, however, preferring a poor sculptor and eventually has her own way.

To-morrow night Mrs. Fiske will begin her second week in "Mrs. Bumpstead-Leigh" at the Lyceum Theatre. Mrs. Fiske in the title role brings into play all her brilliant resources as a comedienne, projecting with admirable effect the originality and humor of the character of the socially ambitious daughter from Missionary Loop, Ind.

For the last eight times on any stage William Gillette will appear as Sherlock Holmes this week at the Empire Theatre. Next week Mr. Gillette will devote to eight full performances of "Held by the Enemy." For the farewell week of April 24 Mr. Gillette will perform these plays: Monday and Tuesday nights, "The Private Secretary"; Wednesday matinee, "Secret Service"; Wednesday and Thursday evenings, "The Merry Wives of Windsor"; Friday, the last night, a special gala performance. On Saturday morning, April 29, Mr. Gillette sails for London.

With three months of prosperity to its credit "Chantecler," with Miss Maude Adams in the title role, will temporarily suspend its season at the Knickerbocker Theatre next Saturday night. Charles Frohman has decided that the next "Chantecler" season, which will be devoted only to the principal cities, will begin next August, opening for a few weeks at the Knickerbocker Theatre and then proceeding to Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Chicago. With one or two slight changes the organization next year will be identical with the group that has supported the star this year.

John Mason is appearing in Augustus Thomas's new drama, "A Man Thinks," at the Thirtieth Street Theatre. The play is one in which intellectual elements are combined with human interest and

NEWS OF THE THEATRES

GRACE GEORGE OPENS THE PLAYHOUSE ON SATURDAY

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